

County: Wapato dump site is the largest we've seen in 30 years

WAPATO, Wash. -- Demolition material from the old Wapato High School building ended up on Simone Gayton's property on **Ashue Road**.

The demolished building did contain asbestos.

Now investigators are trying to find out why the demolition material ended up on Gayton's property and if it contains asbestos.

Yakima County prosecutors say sub-contractors on the Wapato job were illegally dumping it. They're investigating Groate construction of Woodinville and Mid-Valley Recycling of Wapato.

Gayton tells KIMA he allowed them to dump on his property, but he didn't know the materials could be hazardous. He says he wasn't being paid, however county officials tell KIMA they doubt that's the truth.

We spoke with Gayton at his home. He tells us his lawyer told him not to comment on camera.

Prosecutors say Gayton does not have the proper permits or land use to allow dumping on his property. He faces a series of fines and citations.

Officials also want to know why contractors thought it was acceptable to dump on a private property.

"We've never seen this amount of material deposited on a site illegally," said Yakima County Building Officer, Dave Saunders.

For now, county prosecutors say the Wapato School District isn't to blame. It had contracts with the Yakama Nation to properly dispose of the asbestos material.

County officials say new records indicate some of the asbestos material might have gone to the Anderson Pit in Yakima. However, they say Anderson isn't approved to receive hazardous materials.

The county says it appears Gayton has allowed dumping on his property for years.

Officials tell KIMA they haven't determined just how much material is on Gayton's property, but they say it appears to be substantial.

Now, Gayton will have to get permits to keep it there or remove it all himself.

County officials say the problem here is so big that those who are found responsible might soon be answering to federal agents.

Mid Valley Recycling tells us they did not do any dumping.

A Groate construction employee tells us they did dump on the private property.